

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congressman John W. Olver (D-MA) introduced bi-partisan House legislation to require all HUD HOPE VI, a Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant program, is designed to revitalize inner city neighborhoods. The bill, H.R. 1551, the HOPE VI Green Communities Act, requires that all HOPE VI developments meet Green Communities criteria and LEED criteria promote environmentally smart site planning, energy efficiency, and other green building standards.

The bill's bi-partisan cosponsors are: Maxine Waters, Barney Frank, Wayne Gilchrest, Dave Hobson, and others.

"This bill makes good sense. Green public housing will promote health, conserve natural resources, and create jobs," said Congressman Olver.

Buildings are responsible for almost 40 percent of U.S. energy consumption, with residential housing accounting for about 25 percent.

HUD's current energy efficiency standards for HOPE VI developments provide limited incentives to encourage green building.

While a number of states and cities have already incorporated green building criteria into their affordable housing programs, the federal government has not.

"It is time that we take a thoughtful, holistic approach to our federal housing policy," Congressman Olver said.

"Rural Development, Inc. (RDI) heartily endorses Congressman Olver's legislative initiative to 'green' affordable housing," said RDI President and CEO, John J. O'Connell.

Congressman John Olver is the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development.

For more information on affordable green housing in western Massachusetts, contact Paul Douglas, Executive Director of the Western Massachusetts Housing Partnership at 413-539-2100.

For more information on HOPE VI, contact Ray Murphy of the Holyoke Housing Authority at 413-539-2100.

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